

THE ^{L, C}
FALL
OF
VIRTUE:
OR, THE
IRON-AGE:
A
POEM.

—De duro est ultima ferro.
*Protinus irrumpit venæ peioris in ævum
Omne nefas, fugere pudor verumq; fidesq;
In quorum subiere locum, fraudeq; doliq;
Insidiæ & vis & amor sceleratus habendi.*

OVID.

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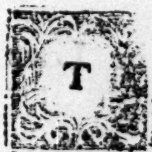
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T O

Mrs. Cokburne.

M A D A M,



THE following Poem flies to your Protection. The Author is sensible, its Defects will be too apparent to one of your Penetration; but that Candour and good Nature, which is the distinguishing Character of Mrs. Cokburne, will, I hope, excuse its Imperfections, and plead with Success for a Pardon.

WHILE Virtue, or a polite Taste, shall be in Esteem, will your Ladyship be the Admiration of the thinking Part of Mankind ; Your shining Merits in all the Parts of Life, command Regard, and add a Glory to the Gloom of Retirement. Fame has Wings ; and the Beauties of a fine Character can never be confin'd to Shades and Groves ; they strike the wondering Crowd, and make the World in Love with Virtue.

NEITHER the Smiles, or Frowns, of the regardless Great, can alter the happy Turn of your Mind : And altho' the Service done by your Husband, and the Family of *Ormiston*, to the Royal Cause, might have
entitled

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entitled him to the first Honours; yet the World shall know with what calm and easy Composure his gen'rous Temper sustains the Loss. In that memorable Year when Rebellion was modish, with what Spirit and loyal Ardour did he join the Army under the brave Duke of *Argyle*; and how well he behaved in Time of Action, his Wounds can witness. While Mr. *Cokburne* lives, the World has an Instance of Worth and Courage, of Merit and good Sense neglected: But as he serv'd without the Motive of Gain, he suffers without the Sting of Resentment. How little can the Frowns of a Court discompose the steady Mind?

SUCH

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S U C H Characters deserve Immortality, and I could wish to transmit them in their native Light, but unequal to the Task I forbear. I am,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's

Very humble and

obliged Servant.

C. L.



T H E

Fall of Virtue :

O R, T H E

I R O N - A G E.



W A K E, ye Nine, and, with superiour
art,

To man the series of his ills impart ;

Draw him involv'd in all the train of woes

His fancy breeds, or from his folly flows ;

Paint nature nodding, and an I R O N - A G E

In all its black deformity and rage :

Describe ambition, stalking with proud air,

Follow'd by death, and dogg'd by pale despair ;

Shew

Shew meaner follies murd'ring hapless man,
 Each trifle tending to contract his span;
 The starts of passion still pursuing life
 With constant torment, and perpetual strife;
 Declining still, he flies from bad to worse,
 A pain his pleasure, and his life a curse.

ONCE happier times, and once unclouded days,
 Brought true delight, and blest a thousand ways;
 All nature charm'd, and ev'n a God would rove,
 Quitting *Elysium*, for th' inviting grove.
 Angels, and Gods, and men, in converse gay,
 Familiar spent each cool decline of day.
 No passions ruff'd, and no cares disturb'd;
 Kind reason rul'd them, and religion curb'd.
 No breach of vows created aking pain,
 No sighing lover languish'd then in vain.
 No lawless joys disturb'd the married Life,
 No jealous husband bred domestick strife.

With

With eager warmth, they sunk in other's arms,
 Lost in sweet raptures, and transporting charms :
 Then earth was heav'n, *Elysium* every grove,
 And nature's system innocence and love.

BUT see that monster steer his mazy way,
 He blackens nature and obscures the day :
 The shining stars emit less radiant rays,
 And the sun darkens and denies to blaze ;
 The moon eclipses, and the tainted air
 Breaths the blue plague, the pestilence and war.
 The foxes earth, the wolves abhor the day,
 The lions rage, and tygers tear the prey.
 All fly apace, and to their holes repair,
 Even the slow snail seeks shelter from the air.

DIRE was the cause ; for hapless man, alas !
 Receiv'd the monster in a mimick dress ;
 Suck'd in his poison, harbour'd the deceit,
 Nor saw the venom lurking in the cheat.
 Ingenious mischief reach'd his easy heart ;
 Vice banish'd virtue with bewitching art ;
 Assum'd its place, usurp'd its regal sway,
 And flash'd at once his Innocence away.

B

Hence

Hence anguish came, the secret cutting smart,
 The inward terrors that perplex the heart ;
 The conscious guilt that preys upon the mind,
 The gust of passions that destroy mankind.
 Swiftly they spread, and soon their boundless rage
 Promoted ruin, and an IRON-AGE.

TH' Almighty saw his fair creation mourn,
 And antient Chaos lab'ring to return ;
 Bid justice quickly livid death unbind,
 To mangle nature, and deface mankind.
 Th' angelick squadrons fly thro' fields of air,
 Shoot thro' the sky, and quick to earth repair ;
 Drive hapless man to savage plains below,
 To meet with vengeance, and encounter woe ;
 The solid globe obliquely push with force,
 Its nature alter, and its airy course ;
 Deform the World, and change its antient plan,
 And fit the climates to the state of man.
 The gath'red clouds they charge with sulph'rous
 store,
 And teach the thunder, from their wombs, to roar ;
 From earth itself they banish calm repose,
 And make it tremble with convulsive throes ;
Black

Black winter rages o'er the sicken'd scene,
 And of its verdure robs the lovely plain.
 No more to love the tempting grove beguiles,
 Nor spring enlivens, or the summer smiles.
 No more the earth unbid her incense yields,
 No flow'rs, spontaneous, grace the desert fields.
 No more in meadows blooms the blushing rose,
 No fig-tree blossoms, and no daisie grows.
 Nature no more exerts her quick'ning power,
 By rip'ning sunshine, or a genial shower:
 Nor can the earth her former glory boast,
 Her spirits stiff'd, and her verdure lost.
 The shorten'd day with furlly aspect lows,
 And nipping frosts invade the rising flow'rs.
 Discharg'd from icy clouds, with rushing sound,
 A crackling tempest rattles o'er the ground;
 Beats down the herb, despoils the lofty pine,
 And shakes the blossom of the budding vine.
 From pole to pole the winds tempestuous fly,
 Dash clouds on clouds, and battle in the sky;
 To foamy mountains rear the roaring main,
 Scour o'er the fields, and sweep the sandy plain;

Or

Or in wild eddies, with resistless might,
 Tear up whole forests in their mazy flight.
 Then clouds half frozen, with a dusky flow,
 Scatter their treasures of unfully'd snow :
 A hoary wildness, ev'ry where, is seen,
 And dazzling white o'er shades the chearful green :
 But boist'rous *Boreas* from his cavern leaps,
 Moulds the loose snow, and rears it up in heaps ;
 Then strait the stony vengeance bears away,
 Begrims the prospect, and obscures the day ;
 With dismal fury, drifts along the plain,
 Wreaths up the cott, and choaks the helpless swain :
 The flocks and swains in vain for shelter fly,
 With woeful bleatings and a mournful cry ;
 But smother'd in the driving tempest die,

BUT, O ye NINE, in liveliest colours draw
 Man swerv'd from virtue, and from nature's law ;
 Pouring destruction with relentless ire,
 And by his passions setting worlds on fire.

THUS smallest sparks begin the fatal blaze,
 And tow'rs, and towns, from their foundation raze :

All

All undistinguish'd ly without a name,
 Lost and confounded in the gen'ral flame.

SEE wild ambition stalking with proud air,
 Fond to possess another's scanty share;
 Swelling its views, the rising fury breaks;
 Each nation trembles, and each prince awakes.
 With noisy shouts, they rush to horrid arms,
 And drums, and trumpets, sound the dire alarms.
 The lively din, inspires a martial heat,
 Reviving courage at each sprightly beat.
 Their glowing breasts demand the noble strife,
 And glory fires them with contempt of life;
 Boldly they march, in terrible array,
 Eager to fight, impatient of delay.
 Approach'd, at last, their radiant files they form;
 Squadrons guard squadrons from th'impending storm.
 Pregnant with death, the brazen bulwarks stand,
 Threat'ning destruction on each hostile band:
 While warlike chiefs the panting troops excite,
 Inspire the charge, and animate the fight.
 The storm begins, the horrid engines play,
 The whizzing vengeance rends its flaming way.

Th^o

Th' imprison'd deaths from tubes impetuous fly,
 And bullets thunder thro' th' encumber'd sky;
 Swift scattering ruin in their airy course,
 Mow squadrons down with a resistless force.

THUS if 'gainst man almighty wrath arise,
 Heav'ns dread artill'ry grumbles in the skies:
 Bolts follow bolts; quick flash the livid fires;
 A nation sinks and in the blaze expires.

BUT now the fury maddens, nor afar,
 Longer, they manage the destructive war.
 Closely engag'd, they deal alternate blows,
 Swords clash with swords, and foes encounter foes.
 They hew, they slash, they mangle, and they wound;
 Scarce half a man lies gasping on the ground.
 Thus slaughter rages, thus are wretches slain,
 Thus mangl'd thousands strow the fatal plain.
 One angry day sends millions to the grave,
 The good, the gay, the coward and the brave.
 Foes then unite in one eternal sleep,
 And mingl'd ly an undistinguish'd heap.
 The flying few are scatter'd o'er the fields,
 The victor chafes, and the stragler yields:

His

His freedom lost, a lingring life remains;
 Condemn'd to slav'ry, and inglorious chains;
 What fatal ills does not ambition breed?
 Witness the wounds of the heroick dead;
 Witness *Pbarsalia*, and *Philippi's* plain;
 Witness the heroes there ignobly slain;
 Witness, *Britannia*, in each fatal field;
 Where *Cromwel* conquer'd, and made nations yield!

MISLED by this are not the great alone;
 Each man has an ambition of his own.
 The peasant wishes, and the sot contrives;
 Alike concern'd, the sop with folly strives.
 All have the passion, tho' in different ways,
 For riches, fame, for honour or for praise.
 For all conjoin'd the piddling priests unite,
 For all contending, madden, damn and fight:
 A sov'reign pow'r o'er all mankind they plead,
 Nay God himself they make of common bread.
 How much unlike the character of those
 Did sacred truth, at first, to man disclose,

The

The humble virtues all their sacrifice,
 Their cell the temple, alms their benefice.
 The list'ning throng, with pleas'd attention, stood,
 Admir'd the doctrines, and departed good :
 But soon ambition taught a further view ;
 They bid the sacred solitude adieu,
 With subtile art's profound regard inspire,
 Creep by degrees, and step by step climb higher :
 Till priests turn'd popes, and nations were enslav'd ;
 For, thus, they taught the method to be sav'd.
 Let priests once damn, the servant lifts the sword,
 And aims its point against his rightful Lord.
 Unhappy men 'midst flaming faggots fry,
 Groan on the rack, or on a gibbet die.
 Kings are depos'd, and states, and princes curs'd,
 Dire war is founded, and rebellion curs'd.
 Religious zeal deludes the thoughtless mob ;
 For God they hate, they murder and they rob.
 What crouds have perish'd, push'd by church alarms,
 To rage and bloodshed, parricide and arms ?

THRICE happy isle ! where laws the priest
 confine,
 Where truth appears so lovely and divine.

Where

Where, mitred *Hoadley* church ambition reins,
 And reasons down ecclesiastick chains.
 What priests should be, from him, the world may
 view ;
 Not from the scribblings of *Sackeverel's* crew.

BUT ev'ry passion, with contending strife,
 Preys on the heart and cuts the threed of life;
 Consumes our days, and, with ingenious art,
 Conveys the sharpest sorrows to the heart.
 Tides upon tides, like rushing torrents, roll
 With desp'rate fury on the tortur'd soul.
 Combin'd, the guardian reason, to enthrall,
 Usurp his seat, and triumph in his fall:
 Ever at variance, in convulsive strife
 They bear us headlong down the stream of life.
 Hatred, revenge and all the sons of rage
 Act tragedies upon the mental stage.
 Vain wild ambition, and a lust of praise,
 Hunt after shadows, thro' forbidden ways.
 Now pride exalts, now discontentments vex;
 A straw elates us, and a straw dejects.

C

Good

Good nature ceases, gen'rous friendship dies,
 Self-love prevails, and justice seeks the skies.
 Disorder rages, and the love of gain
 Exerts a lawless arbitrary reign.
 For gain, the ravaging ambitious great
 Oppress a nation, and defraud a state;
 With griping paws, the toiling peasant squeeze,
 And gather heaps of millions by degrees.
 For this, the puny rogue patrols each road,
 And robs, and murders, spite of man and God;
 For this, the merchant tempts the surly main,
 He scorns the storm, and flies in quest of gain;
 Scours to and fro, wherever oceans roll,
 From sultry *Indus* to the frozen pole.
 But when rough winds the gath'ring waters sweep,
 And raging tempests bellow thro' the deep,
 The reeling billows with a found'ring blow,
 Plunge the fraught vessel in th' abyss below;
 The stormy vengeance, shot from angry skies,
 Crosses at once, and scourges avarice.

ABUSE of passions causes real ill,
 And we're unhappy, only, by our WILL.

'Tis

'Tis good we seek ; but pride and prejudice
 Direct to evil in its gay disguise.
 Even love it self is but an empty name,
 A thing of form, a meer pretended flame ;
 A subtle traffick, and a cautious sale,
 Where gold alone weighs down the equal scale.
Miranda's heart, the empty fop can fix,
 Or 'tis not he, it is his coach and fix.
 What mortal charms can with *Belinda's* vye,
 She has ten thousand pounds, and there's the why.
 At forty five the faded *Celia* warms,
 Her jewels ravish, and her jointure charms.
 Self-int'rest reigns, and by its laws we move ;
 Without a fortune bid adieu to love.
 This only, this, will fire *Myrtilla's* breast,
 She pries no further, she can trust the rest.
 The money'd dunce a modern flame inspires,
 His tattle pleases ; but his fortune fires.
 Gold is love's test, for was it ever found,
 A thousand charms outweigh'd a thousand pound.

THUS all mankind, in wand'ring mazes, run,
 Pursuing phantoms, real goodness shun.

Unhappy state! shall ne'er the hapless earth
 To better times and better men give birth;
 Or live there not some gen'rous souls to grace
 Decaying virtue and the human race.
 Yes, happier times shall once again return,
 And kinder stars and warmer suns shall burn;
 Virtue re flourish, passions cease to rage,
 All nature smile, and see a golden age.

THE dawn begins, the glad *Africa* flies,
 Quits her retreat and hastens from the skies;
 The bench refines, and justice lifts her scale;
 Applauding crouds the lovely goddess HAIL;
 Or is it *F---s* whom the fondling throng
 Huzza, and make the idol of their song.
 'Tis he, that Man Divine, his country's pride,
 Whom fraud or faction never led aside.
 To flattery deaf, to modest merit kind,
 The poor man's support, and the honest's friend;
 Great without pride, a foe to servile ways,
 Above corruption and the lust of praise.

OLD

OLD SCOTIA smile, 'tis he that owns thy cause,
 'Tis he makes right to coincide with laws.
 The fighting client shall complain no more,
 Nor gaudy greatness gild injustice o'er;
 To all alike he's just without regard,
 To prince, to peasant, beggar, or my LORD.

HEROICK instance of distinguish'd worth,
 How shall the muse this character set forth?
 If justice, honour, truth, Men virtue call,
 Look but at F—s, and you see them all.

FROM narrow notions see the church decline,
 The pulpits brighten, and the clergy shine.
 Above the rest, O W—t, 'tis thy praise
 To shine distinguish'd with meridian blaze;
 To virtue's heights make rudest souls aspire,
 And teach the heart to glow with pious fire;
 Warm with the charms of winning eloquence,
 Convince with reason, and persuade with sense:
 Thine is the art to argue without heat,
 With modest calmness manage each debate;
 Without a smile to quibbles sense oppose,
 And with good nature shame thy harden'd foes.

This

This truth 'twere impious from the world to hide,
A *W*——t suffers by a —— pride.

PARTY 'gainst party cease from noisy jars,
Nor pulpits thunder with intestine wars ;
Virtue is modish where a *W*——t fires,
Where *H*——r charms and piety inspires :
His is the talent ev'ry taste to please,
To preach politely, and converse with ease ;
Dress strongest sense in all the charms of stile,
Make vice abash'd and rigid virtue smile,
While foes to goodness listen with delight,
And envious biggots hear away their spight.

BUT what mankind in ev'ry state should be,
What virtue is, REVEUR, we learn from thee ;
Reviv'd we see the great *Spectator*'s flame ;
Thy turn, thy genius and thy taste the same.
Thus *Steel* in quick satyrick sallies shone ;
Thus breath'd, thus wrote immortal *Addison* :
Like them proceed, like their's shall be thy name,
The foremost in the bright records of FAME.

LOVE too refines, now falshood flies to air,
And gaudy grandeur moves no more the fair :

Merit

Merit alone of wealth assumes the place,
 And virtue's charms outshine the charms of face.
 Thus *Mirabella* studiously inclin'd,
 To prune her passions, and adorn her mind,
 With ev'ry grace her tender soul improves,
 To make her worthy of the man she loves;
 By nature finish'd for the pow'r to move,
 Adds truth to softness, constancy to love,
 With wit refines her native excellence,
 And strengthens beauty with the help of sense;
 With modest air she joins (O charming grace!)
 The best good nature to the finest face.
 Practis'd to plainness, leaves all low deceit
 To prudes affected or the light coquette.
 See the soft virgin own a gen'rous flame,
 True to her faith, but cautious of her fame;
 Her soul sincere inspires no artful sigh,
 Nor smile affected with a leering eye;
 No qualms are feign'd, no venal plots design'd,
 No fair excuses tell a shifting mind:
 She scorns the doublings of undoing art;
 Truth is the very language of her heart.

From

From her, *BRITANNIA*, may your beauties see,
 What 'tis to charm, and what yourselves should be
 How worth embellishes the finest face,
 Mends every motion, and improves each grace.
 Cease then t'adorn with fop-alluring show,
 Leave off the *Ogle*, and disdain the *Beau*;
 Arm with the charms of humour, wit and sense,
 And boldly ridicule impertinence.
 Nonsense aham'd shall dwindle to decay,
 No fop shall flatter, and no maid betray;
 Beauty and truth again adorn the land,
 And constancy and love go hand in hand.

EDINA, cease; injustice weep no more
 Thy *P*---t's fate, nor *P*---s act deplore;
 Thy lavish'd treasures and thy hardships scorn,
 Nor frowns of court or kings displeasure mourn.
 Rejoice in sons, that glow with patriot's fire,
 Such as did *F*---s in thy cause inspire:
 Such as did warm the genius of our isle,
 ('Tis small mistake) I mean the great *ARGYLE*

F I N I S.

